

This bill seeks to designate U.S. Highway 54 as a high priority corridor on the National Highway System. The corridor would be known as the Southwest Passage Initiative for Regional and Interstate Transportation Corridor, or the SPIRIT Corridor. U.S. 54 runs from the border with Mexico at El Paso, Texas, through New Mexico, Texas, and Oklahoma, to Wichita, Kansas. This legislation will help improve transportation infrastructure and stimulate economic development in the communities and states through which U.S. Highway 54 passes.

Mr. Speaker, those who live in the eastern United States know that communities are more compact and the commutes much shorter. For the intermountain west, on the other hand, it is not unheard of for people to have to commute 80 miles to work and 80 miles back home. That is just one of the reasons designating U.S. 54 as a high priority corridor is so important to improving the transportation infrastructure and promoting economic development. Safe and efficient highways are critical to all types of traffic, whether it be tourists visiting or goods being shipped from point to point. Designating U.S. 54 as a High Priority Corridor will make it eligible for additional federal grants and transportation funds, which will, in turn, help upgrade the highway and improve its safety and efficiency.

I was pleased that the SPIRIT Corridor designation was included in H.R. 3550 during the 108th Congress, and will again seek inclusion of the designation in any transportation reauthorization legislation we consider this session. I urge my colleagues in the House to support the addition of the SPIRIT Corridor to the list of high priority corridors in our National Highway System.

HONORING PARSONS CHILD AND FAMILY CENTER

HON. JOHN E. SWEENEY

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 26, 2005

Mr. SWEENEY. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize and honor an organization that has provided compassionate and dedicated service to children and families in New York for over 175 years. The Parsons Child and Family Center and their hardworking staff currently serve more than 7,000 children and their families, by providing residential and foster care services and by specializing in special education prevention and mental health services.

The mission of the Parsons Child and Family Center has evolved over time. Starting as a foster home for destitute children, this organization's primary goal today is the preservation of families. It has become a treatment-oriented institution offering intensive, therapeutic services to emotionally disturbed children. The Parsons Child and Family Center recognizes the vital role that a family plays in the upbringing of our children, and it does all it can to prevent the need for foster care placement. After a period of rehabilitation, the Parsons Child and Family Center endeavors to return these children to their families and communities as soon as possible.

The Parsons Center provides invaluable services to countless children and families

across New York State, children in dire need of special care and assistance. The tireless and selfless work of organizations like the Parsons Child and Family Center constitutes the foundation of our nation's communities and embodies the true spirit of the United States. America's greatness is found in ordinary citizens performing extraordinary acts of kindness.

The Parsons Child and Family Center is due recognition for their work with the American family. We should honor the devoted staff of this organization, not only for the lives they touch and the families they heal, but for the example they set for us all.

I ask my fellow members of the House of Representatives to send our gratitude to the Parsons Child and Family Center for its most praiseworthy work.

IN RECOGNITION OF MARY COLEMAN GILMER

HON. MIKE ROGERS

OF ALABAMA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 26, 2005

Mr. ROGERS of Alabama. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute to Mrs. Mary Coleman Gilmer on the celebration of her 100th birthday.

Mrs. Gilmer was born January 24, 1905 in Monroe County, Alabama, and is the oldest of eleven siblings. In 1926 she married Gaddie Gilmer, and moved to Montgomery where the couple first lived. Mrs. Gilmer graduated from Alabama State Teacher's College in the 1940s.

Mary Gilmer has been a servant of the Lord all her life. Mr. Speaker, having shared her love with family, friends and associates. She is known as a generous person, having given money and shelter to those in need over the years, all without want of recognition or thanks for her deeds.

Mary Gilmer is an active Christian, and has served as Minister of Music for the Shiloh Baptist Church Choir, the Branch Grove Missionary Baptist Church Choir, the St. James Missionary Baptist Church Choir in Deatsville, and the Revelation Missionary Baptist Church Choir. She is also a former member of the Old Ship of the Eastern Star Lodge #343.

To this day, Mrs. Gilmer still walks to St. James Baptist Church and frequently appears on many community programs such as the Nat King Cole Society program and the Montgomery Tuskegee Times Black History Awards Banquet. She also loves playing the piano.

Let us all pause to honor Mrs. Mary Coleman Gilmer today, Mr. Speaker, and join in the celebration of this blessed milestone in her long and fruitful life.

HONORING JACK B. REESE, DEL NORTE COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

HON. MIKE THOMPSON

OF CALIFORNIA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 26, 2005

Mr. THOMPSON of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to recognize Jack B. Reese, member and Chairman of the Del Norte County

Board of Supervisors, who is being honored on the occasion of his retirement. Mr. Reese was first elected to serve the citizens of Del Norte County in 1993. He has been an exceptional public servant throughout his long and prestigious career.

Jack Burle Reese received an Associate of Arts Degree in Police Science from Butte College, a Bachelor's Degree in Criminal Justice from California State University, Sacramento and holds a lifetime Teaching Credential. He served the people of California as a Law Enforcement Officer for 30 years.

In twelve years of service as a member of the Del Norte County Board of Supervisors, Jack Reese championed many issues to improve the lives of his constituents and to bring prosperity to the community. He provided leadership for Del Norte County as Chairman of the Northern Rural Training & Employment Consortium, as Chairman of the Solid Waste Management Authority, as a member of the Regional Air Quality Control Board and as Chairman of the Local Transportation Commission. In addition, he served on the Del Norte Senior Center Board of Directors and the Local Agency Formation Commission.

Jack was a Command Sergeant Major in the U.S. Army and was a highly regarded member of the Crescent City Police Department and the Del Norte County Sheriff's Department. He attained management and executive certificates from the Commission on Peace Officer Standards as well as specialized certification from the State Department of Education and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

As a private entrepreneur, he owned and operated Reese Hydro Farms for over twenty years. He is a member of the Crescent City Car Club and founded the Sea Cruise car event. He is a Harley-Davidson enthusiast, an accomplished photographer, an amateur astronomer and a passionate karaoke singer.

Jack Reese is a native of Bellflower, California who has shared his life with his wife of 38 years, Kathryn. They have three children, Greg, Ryan and Angela and three grandsons.

Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate at this time that we recognize Jack B. Reese for his commitment and dedication to his profession and for his service to the people of California.

HONORING FIRST LIEUTENANT DIANE GARRISON

HON. DALE E. KILDEE

OF MICHIGAN

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, January 26, 2005

Mr. KILDEE. Mr. Speaker, I rise before you today on behalf of the courageous men and women of the Michigan State Police. Day after day, these brave individuals work together to ensure safe streets for the citizens of Michigan. On Friday, January 28, the Michigan State Police will gather to celebrate the retirement of First Lieutenant Diane Garrison, after 25 years of dedicated service to the force.

Diane Garrison enlisted with the Michigan State Police June 11, 1979, and graduated on September 26. During her distinguished career, she has been stationed at several posts, including Bay City, Lansing, Detroit, Brighton, Coldwater, and ultimately Flint, where she served as Post Commander until her retirement on December 31, 2004.